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A STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY AND SUPPORTIVE RESEARCH FROM WHICH
PROCEED CURRICULUM PROVISIONS RELATIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE
VOCATIONALLY ORIENTATED MENTALLY RETARDED ADOLESCENT

by

Sister Mary Colette Philips, O.P.

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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approved for the Graduate Committee
of the Cardinal Stritch College by

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INTRODUCTION

What does one do with the mentally retarded adolescent who is to join the labor force on commencement day--the future grocery clerk, office boy, hospital aide?

The answer begins in Vocational Rehabilitation--a means to a livelihood--to productive and at least partially self-sufficient life. A vocational oriented program cannot obliterate the limitations of mental retardation. But it can help the mentally retarded adolescent reach his fullest potential. A sound vocational program for the mentally retarded student is as important to his career as is the academic preparation for the college-bound student, and school administration, as well as teaching staff, should adopt a program through which the necessary objectives can be attained.

What, then, is a legitimate program for developing vocational potential among the mentally retarded?

If the theory is accepted that the basic philosophy in the education of the exceptional is preparation for living in a world of non-handicapped people, then the same basic principles of curriculum construction apply to both the exceptional and non-exceptional, except for such changes as are indicated by special needs and the conditions arising therefrom.¹

It is the writer's conviction that this mentally retarded child at the age of sixteen chronologically but with a mental age of twelve or

¹M. Frampton and E. Gall, Special Education for the Exceptional (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1955), VI, p. 162.

thirteen, is just coming into his own, and to terminate his formal education at this point is to deny him the opportunity for the very education and training that we theoretically and legislatively state is the purpose of education--to prepare him for life work--at the very moment the individual is most ready to profit from the opportunity. For this student, job experiences and academic programs to support these experiences must be the day-to-day objectives. It is realized that the student is reaching the peak of his vertical growth in academic ability--the academic development phase may be arbitrarily considered to extend from age six to fourteen. However, he has abilities that can be developed into useful skills through non-remedial horizontal instruction. Therefore, the curriculum should be designed to help teachers combine technical activities with regular academic lessons and thus increase social competence by concentrating on those academic aspects which have direct bearing on occupational and social adjustment.

It would appear, therefore, that the establishment of an ideal program for developing vocational potential among the mentally retarded would be shaped by the following guides:

1. The vocational program should be a continuing process of the student's education, the elementary special class program serving as a foundation to the Vocational Rehabilitation program. It should provide for the sequential building of social skills and attitudes started during the first years of school experience on into work experience and for the practical application of academic skills learned during the preceding years.

2. The student should be exposed to a continuity of instruction and a sequence of learning experiences that can be refined,

expanded, and presented at any level.

3. The academic and occupational skills program should be supplemented by work experience opportunities. The work these young people do now is not intended to be their life's work but would be designed to provide the kinds of learning situations that they will face once placed in a work-a-day setting.

4. Besides educational, vocational, and social needs, the training program should be related to psychological and moral development.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This paper will attempt to show that the philosophy underlying the Vocational Rehabilitation program, from which proceed curriculum provisions, is based upon data resulting from scientific investigations of the student and adult needs of this group, rather than upon varying subjective philosophies, old wives' tales, or "good logic."

The philosophical basis of Vocational Rehabilitation will first be explored by attempting to answer the questions through a review of research:

1. What does it mean to rehabilitate?
2. What is the purpose of the transitional period?
3. Do research studies regarding the occupational, social, and economical adjustment of the mentally retarded adolescent validate curriculum provisions shaped by guides outlined on pages 2 and 3 of the Introduction?

The Limitations and Significance of the Study

Reported research is not relevant to institutional training or the sheltered workshop but to the vocational preparation of the educable mentally retarded who live in the community before, during, and after vocational training. Emphasis, for the most part, is on research studies made since 1960.

Although the program is called Vocational Rehabilitation it believes completely in the significance of habilitation. In view of the connotation of the term rehabilitation to most people, it shall be used in this study to mean adjustment. Those who are concerned with the rehabilitation of the mentally retarded adolescent should take into consideration the results and implications of research in the planning and development of programs for the mentally retarded adolescent. Such knowledge will also facilitate the exploration of new techniques in this vocational preparation and placement of the retarded.

Definition of Terms

Rehabilitation: The National Council on Rehabilitation in August, 1943 defined rehabilitation as the restoration of the handicapped to the fullest physical, mental, social, vocational, and economic usefulness of which they are capable.¹

Vocational Rehabilitation: One aspect of a total rehabilitation concept which has as its primary objective the development of the handicapped as a productive, wage earning, and tax-paying member of society.²

Habilitation: Mr. Whitehouse makes a distinction between rehabilitation and habilitation. According to him, rehabilitation is concerned with re-education and habilitation with the education of

¹Roberta M. Townsend, "Sheltered Workshops and Homebound Programs: A Handbook on Their Establishment and Standards of Operation" (New York: National Committee on Sheltered Workshops and Homebound Programs, 1952).

²H. W. Yount, "Rehabilitation in a Dynamic Economy," in Proceedings: Conference on Rehabilitation Concepts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 17-18, 1962. Chicago: American Mutual Insurance Alliance.

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the handicapped. Rehabilitation clients need services which will restore them to self-sufficient or nearly self-sufficient living. On the other hand, most habilitation clients have never lived independent lives. These individuals, for the most part, have little or no previous contact with the work world. They need a vocational development program which will provide them with varied work experiences and realistic job training.³

Transitional: The sequence in the educable program which evaluates, trains, and places the individual in appropriate community settings concurrent with continuation of formal learning experiences to focus educational effort toward preparing the individual for his post-school living.

Educable: A person with mildly retarded intellectual and adaptive behavior who either has the potential or the proven ability to show a degree of semi-independence or independence in his environment.

³F. A. Whitehouse, "Habilitation Concept and Process," Journal of Rehabilitation, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1953), 3-7.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Meaning of Rehabilitation

There has been in recent years a growth of practical programs designed to prepare mentally retarded youth for a productive role in society. However, any "practical" program which fails in its objectives "is not very practical." And sometimes the reason for failure may be attributed to a hazy definition of the objectives. Therefore the philosophical basis or the purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation will first be explored.

Exactly what does it mean to rehabilitate? A wide range of answers can be forthcoming. A fairly direct answer might be to get the individual a job; to help him over the rough spots. If rehabilitation simply means providing job opportunities for the mentally retarded adolescent there are indications that it may not be enough. The object of introducing the retarded to normal competitive society appears intriguing but one wonders if it goes far enough. In many of the follow-up studies on special class students who left school when they reached the legal age permissible for leaving, it was found that the post-school adjustment of these former students was usually deficient when compared to that of the non-retarded worker.

Peterson and Smith¹ reported a comparative analysis of the civic and occupational adjustment of a group of educable retarded adults who had terminated school at the age of sixteen. The reason given by the retarded for leaving school was that of going to work. In this study the adjustment of the retarded adults was reported to have been inferior to that of their intellectual and educational superiors in several areas. The areas of poorer adjustment included: higher divorce rates, lesser participation in civic organization, a greater number of legal offenses committed and greater unemployment and changing of jobs.

In another study of a similar nature made by Peckman² in an effort to find out why retarded workers lost or quit their jobs, it was found that rarely did they lose their jobs because of an inability to do the required tasks. Rather, they quit or lost jobs because of teasing and ridicule of fellow-workers, lacked initiative and job responsibility, salary dissatisfaction, inability to budget properly and because they lacked social and vocational sophistication.

Other studies and reports (Eskridge and Partridge,³ and

¹L. Peterson and L. Smith, "The Post-School Adjustment of Educable Mentally Retarded Adults With that of Adults of Normal Intelligence," Exceptional Children, XXV (April, 1960), 404-408.

²Ralf Peckman, "Problems in Job Adjustment of the Mentally Retarded," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 56 (July, 1951), 448-53.

³C. Eskridge and D. Partridge, "Vocational Rehabilitation for Exceptional Children Through Special Education," Exceptional Children, Vol. 29 (June, 1963), 452-58.

Kirk⁴) indicated that the mentally retarded were losing jobs more often by their failure to adjust to a work situation than by their inability to perform the specific tasks assigned. A further study of the Liverpool Youth Employment Service in England by Foale⁵ showed job changes among retarded subjects to be five times what it is among the normal.

In surveying the vocational studies on the mentally retarded prior to 1960, in an era in which the Vocational Rehabilitation program was slow getting off the ground, the studies on the success of vocational placement indicated that there was a need for providing the educable mentally retarded with a more extensive program geared toward social development than merely job placement. Too, data collected from research studies in the past decade strongly note that retardates' job failures are more likely to result from personal-social than industrial shortcomings. Therefore, it became the goal of rehabilitation not simply to provide job opportunities for the mentally retarded but to see that the student receives a systematic progression of training in occupational and academic skills and, more importantly, that he is taught the proper attitudes to cope with the demands that will be made on him.

The Purpose of the Transitional Period

In proposing a transitional period, the question of purpose is pertinent to this as well as to other rehabilitation efforts. If the

⁴S. A. Kirk, Educating Exceptional Children (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1962)

⁵Martha Foale, "The Special Difficulties of the High Grade Mental Defective Adolescent," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 60 (July, 1955), 867-77.

objective is to bridge the gap between school and employment or to help solve many of the practical problems which will be encountered in daily life the solution is more simple. Problems, often called the persisting life problems--such as learning to live safely, keep healthy, communicate ideas, etc.--are direct problems calling for direct solutions. If, however, the objectives also have something to do with the retarded thinking of himself as a human being, rather than a retarded human being, then the solution is not so simple.

When the retarded child enters into his post-school period, he must make adjustments to a larger world and more complex way of life. The retarded adolescent faces almost overwhelming challenges in making this transition from childhood to adulthood and adjusting to his environment with dignity and satisfaction because the approach of the average person towards the problem of mental deficiency carries with it considerable emotional coloring. The meaning of the term is confused and often the general public thinks in terms of delinquency or emotional difficulties. Retarded individuals might be viewed as members of a minority group subject to the prejudices and discriminations experienced by such persons. Gellman noted "Prejudice toward handicapped persons with their open or hidden rejection by the non-handicapped occurs at all socioeconomic levels and in all regions of our country. It is evident in the social, educational and vocational discrimination which hamper disabled persons."⁶

The analysis of questionnaire data obtained from students in

⁶W. Gellman, "Roots of Prejudice Against the Handicapped," Journal of Rehabilitation, 25 (July-August, 1959), 4-6.

a human relations workshop by Ostbund⁷ revealed a general lack of information concerning the retarded. They believed that job placement was more difficult for the mentally retarded than for the physically handicapped because of low work potential, social stigma, lack of available jobs, and need for constant supervision and special training.

A study made by Cohen⁸ to determine employer attitudes toward hiring the mentally retarded showed that their attitudes were not a function of the realistic concept of mental retardation but were held irrespective of knowledge of mental retardation. The study also indicated that there was not a positive relationship between attitudes and education.

Because the retarded adolescent's adjustment will be enhanced or hindered by the parental and community attitudes he encounters, there is a great need for educating parents, the community in general, and employers in particular with regard to the potentialities of the mentally retarded. The Vocational Rehabilitation program also must include self-concept development activities the way it includes academic and other activities. The idea of self-concept is a rather abstract one that is not always visibly incorporated into programming for the retarded.

A self-concept which is positive may be expected to develop if

⁷Leonard A. Ostbund, "Human Relations Students' Opinions Concerning Vocational Placement of the Handicapped," Rehabilitation, 62 (July-September, 1967), 43-45.

⁸J.S. Cohen, "Employer Attitudes Toward Hiring the Mentally Retarded Individual," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 67 (March, 1963), 705-13.

the individual has reasonably successful experiences in the particular environment in which he happens to find himself. He cannot be expected to form a positive self concept in an environment which expects him to behave as if he were not handicapped and then rejects him for failure to meet these expectations.

A study designed by Guthrie, Butler, and Gorlow in an attempt to develop a system of personality assessment based on the retarded's conceptualization of himself and his views of the attitudes of others toward him shows that "the retarded person learns a set of attitudes, favorable or unfavorable, about himself, his worth, his talents, his threat to others, and these reflected appraisals influence many aspects of his behavior."⁹ The study also demonstrates that the retarded can attribute both negative and positive characteristics to himself, but that he is consistent in that he apparently holds the same opinion of himself that he feels others hold of him.

On the basis of research and clinical evidence there is recognized a need for Vocational Rehabilitation programs: (1) to explore ways to help the student attain a realistic and accepting attitude toward himself, his limitations, and his socio-economic environment; (2) to provide the necessary experiences with reality which will help him to form a positive self concept--one based on his actual inner abilities, interest and strivings.

⁹G. M. Guthrie and A. J. Butler and L. Gorlow, "Patterns of Self-Attitudes of Retardates," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 66 (September, 1961), 222-29.

National public information campaigns and the successful experience of employers who have hired the retarded are doing much to eliminate the community-held stereotype of the retardate as an unproductive, relatively helpless and dependent individual who is or will become a community burden. In spite of significant advances during the last few years, a great deal still needs to be accomplished if the effectiveness of the rehabilitation process with the mentally retarded adolescent is to be maintained and increased.

Guides Based on Research Studies for the Establishment of a
Valid Program for Developing Vocational Potential Among
the Mentally Retarded

1. The vocational program should be a continuing process of the student's education. It should provide for the sequential building of social skills and attitudes started during the first years of school experience on into work experience. It should provide for the practical application of academic skills learned during the preceding years.

2. The student should be exposed to a continuity of instruction and a sequence of learning experiences that can be refined, expanded, and presented at any level needed.

Preparation of the student for employment and community adjustment is a total developmental sequence of preparation which begins with the child's first day at school. Elementary school pupils are taught beginning basic skills, attitudes, and habits which will enable them to function adequately in the more complex environment of the senior program. In addition, they are provided some elementary understanding and orientation to the world of work. The vocational program starts in kindergarten by enlarging the usual fireman-policeman-doctor

occupation to include carpenter, florist, machinist.

A study was made by Garrison¹⁰ to show if an educational program consciously directed at the development of social skills and attitudes resulted in the adjustive behavior of mentally retarded youth. The subjects for this study were from a high school class for the educable mentally handicapped. The C.A. range was 14-8 to 18-2. Subjective reports of employers who had given part-time work and odd jobs to the students the year before were used in selecting areas wherein difficulties would most likely occur. The literature was investigated to find other identified problems of adjustment. As a result, the following areas were singled out for the teaching of specific skill and attitudes: personal appearance, work habits, employer-employee relationships, employee-employee relationships and manners.

Results of the study showed that change in adjustive behavior did occur in the group while they enjoyed an educational program that was directed at the development of social skills and attitudes. The social skills that did develop during the year seemed to carry over into the skills that employers consider important in holding a job.

¹⁰Ivan Garrison, "The Development of Social Skills and Attitudes," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 1 (July, 1951), 338-43.

Other studies made by Skeels¹¹ and Kirk¹² indicate that the developmental rate of the mentally retarded is positively affected by early stimulation and education. In the light of these studies, curriculum development should use a spiral approach in sequential order from the primary through the secondary level in keeping with the slower maturation of the educable retarded. The educational program should begin early in life and continue into adult life. The units of work and tool subject areas should be in a balanced fashion and in developmental progression in relation to the developmental and maturational needs of the learner.

The relation between retardates' academic skills and their job success is not clear. However, it stands to reason that academic skills increase adequacy and reduce frustration. The retarded adolescent is just coming into his own at the age of 16 and therefore needs a continuation of academic training together with a general program of job training. To cut him off from academic training at this age would be unfair to him and would likely leave the potential of this student unexplored and unfinished. It is true that the academic program should be more realistically

¹¹Harold M. Skeel, "Some Iowa Studies of the Mental Growth of Children in Relation to Differentials of Environment--A Summary," Yearbook National Society for Study of Education, Vol. 39 (1940) 281-308.

¹²S. A. Kirk, "Experiments in the Early Training of the Mentally Retarded," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 56 (1952), 692-700.

oriented toward vocational goals--academic teaching relating to the work training situation such as teaching income tax, budgeting, social security, etc.,--but there are few subjects that cannot be taught with a vocational orientation while still challenging the child.

Some curriculum are organized to promote maximum social and vocational adjustment by allowing the student to devote one-half time to school work and one-half time on a paying job. While it cannot be denied that this is an effort to do something positive, such a program is not without fault. Peckman's studies showed that even when retardates fail for reasons that can be later classified as social, such social failures may, nevertheless, be secondary to antecedent failure in non-social achievement such as telling time, making change, etc.¹³ It is generally accepted that the retarded needs more education and training than most students. It seems inappropriate that a group needing extra help but expected to be self-sustaining should be deprived of a single day of instruction. The acquisition of skills needed for daily living and for vocational competency is basic to the needs of the educable mentally retarded adolescent.

Vocational education should be an integrated part of a well-rounded education and rote training on simple vocational tasks hardly represents a praiseworthy goal. With the appropriate placement and instruction of the child, the school can contribute much to

¹³Peckman, "Problems in Job Adjustment of the Mentally Retarded," 448-53.

the ultimate social and vocational adjustment of the retarded person as an adult.

3. The academic and occupational skills program should be supplemented by work experience opportunities. The work these young people do now is not intended to be their life's work but would be designed to provide the kinds of learning situations that they will face once placed in a work-a-day setting.

It is felt that a graduate whose program combined practical work experience opportunities with related and reinforcing curricula in the classroom will be better prepared to enter the work world and succeed than will one whose program was limited to the school setting.

At the secondary level, there is an upsurge of interest in developing programs combining classroom work and part-time placement in actual work situations. This education plan is referred to by various names--work study, work experience, or school work programs.

A research project by the Division of Special Education in Iowa City, directed by Howe,¹⁴ was undertaken to determine if all individuals involved in high school work-study programs needed on-the-job placement as an integral part of their program. Findings of Howe's research suggest that not all educable mentally retarded students in work-study programs may need on-the-job training as part of their program, but (there is no reason to believe, at this time), that such training is detrimental to the young retarded's later adjustments as adults. However, the typical practice seems to be to

¹⁴Clifford Howe, "Is Off Campus Work Placement Necessary for All Educable Mentally Retarded?" Exceptional Children, Vol. 35, No. 3 (May, 1968), 323-26.

provide on-the-job training for the students who seem to have the best chance of being successful. Best students are often placed first in order to develop confidence in the program by the business leaders in the community. And yet, those with lower potential are the ones who most need placement, plus supervision, in order to improve their job holding potential at the termination of their school careers.

A three-year study was done by Edmund Neuhaus¹⁵ to determine the feasibility of placing the educable mentally retarded in competitive situations. Twenty-nine Educable Mentally Retardates, Intelligent Quotients ranging from 60 to 80, were placed on either an industrial or commercial job. Sixty per cent of the Educable Mentally Retardates were average or above average in their work performance; social adjustment was much improved and some notable successes were made by individual subjects. This study showed also that the most important aspect of job success was not learning job skills, but the Educable Mentally Retardate's ability to adjust and work well with his fellow-employees.

Research has shown that many jobs into which the retarded are placed require minimum of specific occupational skills. The minimum skills that may be required can often be learned on the job in a short period of time. As a consequence many programs which formerly stressed specific skill training have abandoned this program in favor of one which stresses development of attributes which may be generalized to any job situation.

¹⁵Edmund Neuhaus, "A Unique Pre-Vocational Program for the Educable Retardates," Mental Retardation, Vol. 3 (August, 1965), 19-21.

According to Kokaska,¹⁶ the special education program started in the Phoenix Public High School System in 1959, found that most of the business and industrial organizations in the area preferred to train their own workers for a specific assembly job. If the vocational coordinators could assure the employers that a student was capable of performing the technical skill that was required at a particular task, the employer was willing to train the student for the required operations and responsibilities.

Adjustment to the realities of the work world offer identity, strength, involvement, feelings of sameness and feelings of wholeness for the handicapped student. Toward this end, the assessment of work potential becomes an important facet of the school program.

Students must be permitted to explore via work experiences--this exploration tends to reveal much about their potential for working in general. Training facilities could not hope to duplicate the myriad of work assignments and skill levels that are required in the labor market. Exploration leads to better understanding of capabilities and limitations for work success on the part of the student and the school. Supervised work experience provides vocational evaluators, employers and students an opportunity to experiment in the employment situation while the students are still within the responsibility of the school and the resources that could implement any required change. Through this kind of work experience deficiencies that might show up on the job could be corrected,

¹⁶C. Kokaska, "Preparing the Retarded for Semi-skilled and Skilled Occupations," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April, 1969), 71-74.

thus enabling the youth to better assume the responsibilities of employment and self-support upon termination of school.

4. Besides educational, vocational, and social needs, the training program should be related to psychological and moral development. What is the role of Vocational Rehabilitation in developing the mentally retarded youth psychologically and morally? Psychological and moral development should play a large part in the objectives of any good school--normal or retarded.

To influence the child morally and psychologically is not to nurture in him a particular virtue, followed by another and another, or to set up educational goals for him, then to presuppose that he has a realistic and accepting attitude toward himself and his limitations if and when these goals are reached. To train the child morally and psychologically is to form him to understand his actions in relation to God, to himself, and to his fellowman; to develop him into a self-disciplined individual--one who is master of himself and who is able to regulate his own conduct when it is necessary to follow some rule of life.

If the adjustment of normal children so vitally depends upon this type of formation, the fate of the retarded child does so to an even greater extent. A good school teaches "morals" by offering many opportunities for the student to make judgments--it is the role of the school to guide these moral choices--but even more basic, the school must give the opportunity for such choices. A youngster is helped to grow morally when he lives among people who themselves have found meaning in their lives, who meet the question marks of life with courage and serenity; people who can help the child develop the answers to two basic questions: Does life have a purpose? and

What is that purpose?

The goals of education today are changing. To quote D. H. Kruger, "To help a human being achieve dignity, self-respect, and usefulness as a citizen is a goal worth working for."¹⁷ This cannot be achieved unless, as the ancient philosophers teach us, every human being first knows himself. Only self-knowledge and the realization of one's inner worth as a human being can bring self-respect. Once a person has self-respect, has a sound self-image realizing his own personal worth and dignity, can he possibly be a useful citizen in the community.

Unless the ideal of personal dignity before God and this inner worth as a person is foremost in the mind of the educator, and is solidly conveyed to the student, then no matter what is said, no matter how fancy the words in which it is said, the sole objective of Vocational Rehabilitation--contrary to what is piously claimed--is the training of the retarded adolescent for employment.

The school's contribution to the psychological and moral development of the retarded adolescent builds on a foundation already established in the home. By their conversations and actions the parents in the home play the leading role in providing attitudes, values, motivation and sense of achievement for they are involved in the child's development from the beginning.

If the foundations of psychological and moral development have not been laid before the adolescent leaves the school environment,

¹⁷D. H. Kruger, "Trends in Service Employment: Implications for the Educable Mentally Retarded," Exceptional Children, Vol. 30 (May, 1963), 167-72.

they never will be. The end product of this process of development is a person who is a good citizen--a person who is able to adjust to life--one who can accept pressures and tensions while remaining productive and able to derive a sense of satisfaction from life.

Even though retardates have limited intelligence, their feelings, attitudes and values are similar to those of more intelligent persons. Society must be informed about them and instilled with a feeling of brotherly concern for them as individuals, being reminded that, although these individuals are unequal in talents, they are equal in dignity because they are children of the same Father.

Only by observing the adequacy of the finished products of any program can its validity, effectiveness, and desirable modifications be determined. In order to validate curriculum provisions founded upon Vocational Rehabilitation philosophy, a study was made by Dinger¹⁸ to determine which positive adjustments can and are being made by former pupils of classes for the educable retarded founded upon said philosophy. The results of the analysis of the adult adjustment status of a sampling of one hundred former pupils of the Altoona Occupational Educational Program is as follows:

Concerning occupational adjustment: "Adult retarded are capable of successful occupational adjustment to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs which have few academic requirements. These adults are satisfied in their present jobs and enjoy quite favorable ratings by their employers. The importance of intelligence in this area of occupational and community adjustment is not to be denied, but it should be kept in proper perspective and not viewed as the major criterion of job success."

¹⁸Jack Dinger, "Post-School Adjustment of Former Educable Retarded Pupils," Exceptional Children, XXVII (March, 1961), 353-57.

Concerning social adjustment: "The percentage of law violators is low and is considerably less than those reported in previous studies. Group socialization is not a strong characteristic of these people. These subjects, as a group, were not identifiable by the writer as being mentally retarded when judged by such factors as their appearance, home jobs, conversation, dress, wives, and children. The majority of the group are not identified as retarded adults by their employers."

Concerning economic adjustment: "These retarded adults are capable of independent economic adjustment at a comfortable level. The great majority of the group are employed on jobs which provide an income that enables them to be self-supporting. They have developed practical procedures for dealing with financial problems and do use the instruments of finance to varying degrees."

Other educators have within recent years conducted follow-up studies of post-school adjustment of retardates in order to validate provisions of curriculum. The consensus of these studies shows that the overall adjustment of former students of these programs has been sufficiently successful to warrant the programs' continuation and implementation of curriculum.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The educational-vocational continuum is organized on the bases that the overall vocational competence of an individual is made up of many factors, all of which must be provided for in an educational program from the early school years onward. In addition to the technical knowledge, skill, and capacities, the mentally retarded student also has certain behavior patterns, psychological adjustments, personal appearance standards and other attributes which affect his total vocational makeup.

Many studies have demonstrated that the mentally retarded adolescent can be rehabilitated if he can be helped to develop an adequate work personality, to derive satisfaction from work, and to adapt to the demands of a work situation.

All normal and retarded must mature physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Moral training is aimed at the optimum formation of the whole person. To place the higher-level retarded in any of the very lowest jobs simply because they are readily available or to train him solely for employment is the very antithesis of moral development.

Those who are concerned with the education and rehabilitation of the mentally retarded have to take into consideration the results of relevant research in the planning and development of their programs. They ought to be aware of the assumptions upon which their

programs for the vocational preparation and placement of the retarded are based, and must know which of these assumptions are supported by sound research, and which have been passed on through the years as part of the folklore about the mentally retarded. "The eventual realization that in rehabilitation we are necessarily and basically problem-solvers will lead us inevitably to the study and application of the scientific method."¹

Summary

What do you have to contribute to make the lives of the retarded richer, not just to make these people employable, but to enable them to become in a broad and comprehensive sense of the word, humanly rehabilitated.²

Total rehabilitation of the mentally retarded is based on the philosophy that the handicapped child should be helped to achieve the highest degree of independence of which he is capable. The goal of rehabilitation is to provide education and training from early childhood through adulthood, aimed at the development of an individual who can function as effectively as possible as a member of his community. Therefore, special education teachers from the elementary and secondary levels should cooperate in a continuing systematic follow-up program in order to develop more complete longitudinal concepts of the retarded and hence do a better job of preparation at every level.

When the retarded child enters into his preschool period, he needs a realistic curriculum that will enable him to take his place

¹Wendell Johnson, "A Broader and Bolder Rehabilitation Program," Journal of Rehabilitation, 29 (1) (January-February, 1963), 41.

²Ibid., 14.

in the community, get a job, and keep it. Educational provisions--based on scientific data and not on mere conjecture--for this adolescent, focus on maintaining him within the school for longer periods, and increasingly centers on vocational training and placement in suitable employment. Personal-social development rather than academic skill development occupies proportionately greater emphasis in curriculum content, and the value in giving youth work experience in industry while he is still under supervision of the school is highly recognized.

Studies made prior to 1960 showed that a serious gap existed between the provisions of special education and readiness for competitive employment. In many schools retarded children were receiving an inadequate education because their teachers failed to understand the scientific basis for curriculum and educational method. Many adolescents dropped out of school at a time when their social and vocational needs were the greatest simply because the school program was not adequate for them. As a result, they left school ill-prepared for useful work. These studies also brought to light the need for a well planned educational program on the senior high level to complete the retarded pupil's training started at the elementary level.

In the past decade much data have been collected to substantiate the theory that the mentally retarded possess considerable capabilities for social and vocational adjustment when given the opportunity and stimulation for development. Too, improved education training opportunities have resulted in a rapid increase in the number and kinds of jobs in which the retarded are employed. Summarized

longitudinal follow-up studies of community adjustment indicated a

fairly good adult adjustment for most mentally retarded students throughout their life upon completion of a vocational oriented program based on present day Vocational Rehabilitation philosophy.

Teachers of the mentally handicapped should be interested in rote learning of subject matter, developing manual skills, but they should be more concerned with developing these students into self-disciplined individuals; developing in them general dispositions that, once created, adapt themselves readily to the particular circumstances of human life.

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